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TALES OF AVVAIYAAR



A POET SAINT OF TAMIL NADU

Chitra

Amar Chitra Katha

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Tales of Avvaiyaar

Avvaiyaar, the renowned Tamil poetess, came to be revered as a saint. She had no one home and travelled where her fancy took her. This brought her into contact with all sorts of people. Poor and rich, commoner and king, were alike to her.

A story is told of the origins of Avvaiyaar. It is said that she was born of a low-caste mother and a high-caste father. The father forced the mother to abandon the child, but this story is not accepted by all.

There is also a popular belief that the cowherd boy who came to the aid of the hungry Avvaiyaar was Lord Muruga (or SUBRAHMANYA) himself come down to meet the great poetess. And, of course, it was only before this deity in disguise that Avvaiyaar acknowledged defeat.

Avvaiyaar's poems are vigorous and zestful and full of earthy common sense and wisdom. They also provide telling insights into human nature.

Because of labour unrest, we have not been able to maintain the printing and despatch schedules of Amar Chitra Katha and Tinkle from the middle of October 1984. The inconvenience caused to our subscribers and our readers is regretted.

We hope to be back on schedule in the near future.


~ Publishers.

OUR NEXT RELEASE ON
February 1, 1985


TAPATI

AVVAI AND PAARI


ONE DAY, A VISITOR WAS ANNOUNCED TO THE COURT OF KING PAARI OF PARAMBU NAAD.



THE REVERED
POET AVVAAR
IS HERE TO SEE
YOU, SIR.




AVVAI! DEAR
AVVAI! YOU HAVE COME
AT LAST TO THREAD
YOUR SWEET VERSES
LIKE PEARLS ON THE
DIME STRING OF
MY LIFE!



I AM SO HAPPY
TO SEE YOU AGAIN,
PAARI.

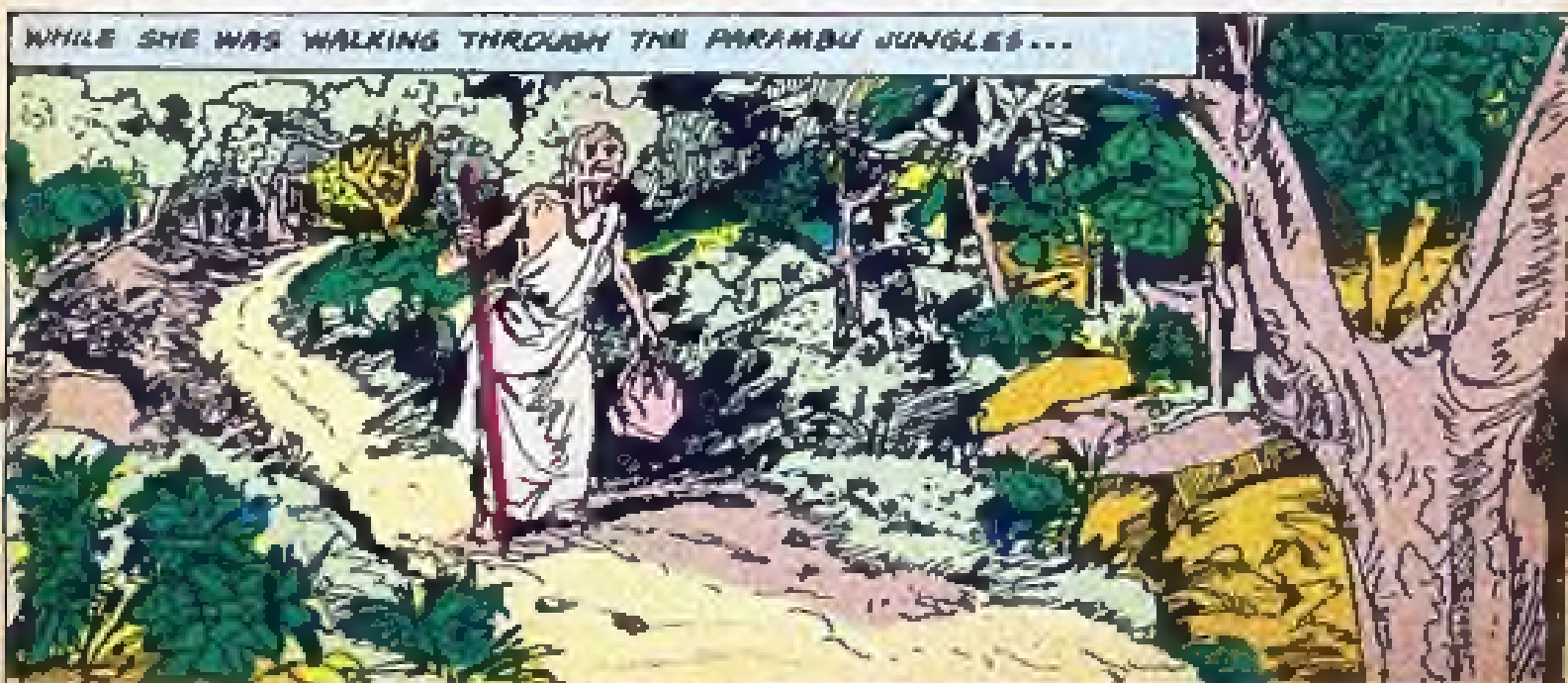
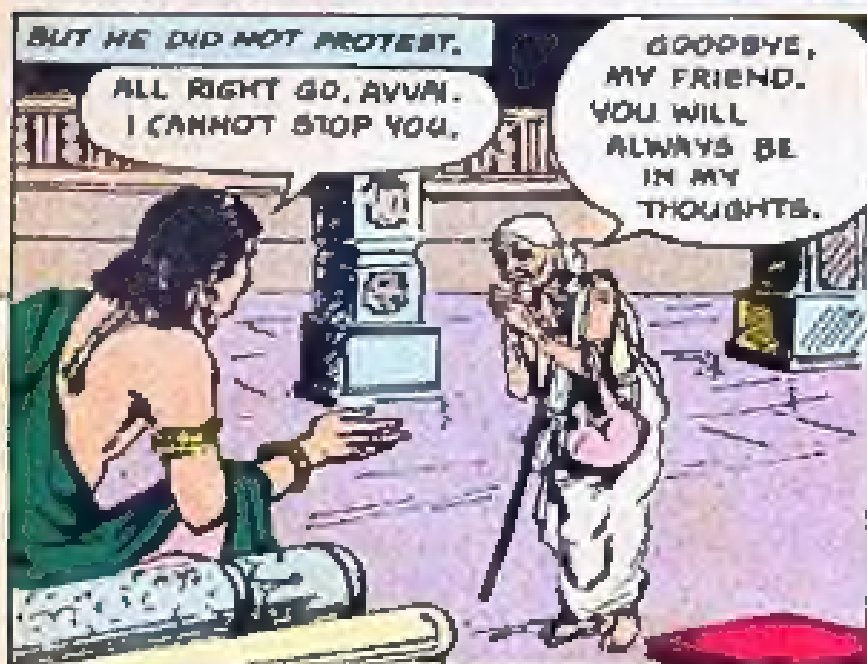
BUT YOU
LOOK TIRED.



ANY KING WOULD
GLADLY PROVIDE
YOU WITH A CAR-
RIAGE. BUT, NO, YOU
WILL INSIST ON
WEARING OUT
YOUR FEET.

WHAT
AM I
TO DO?





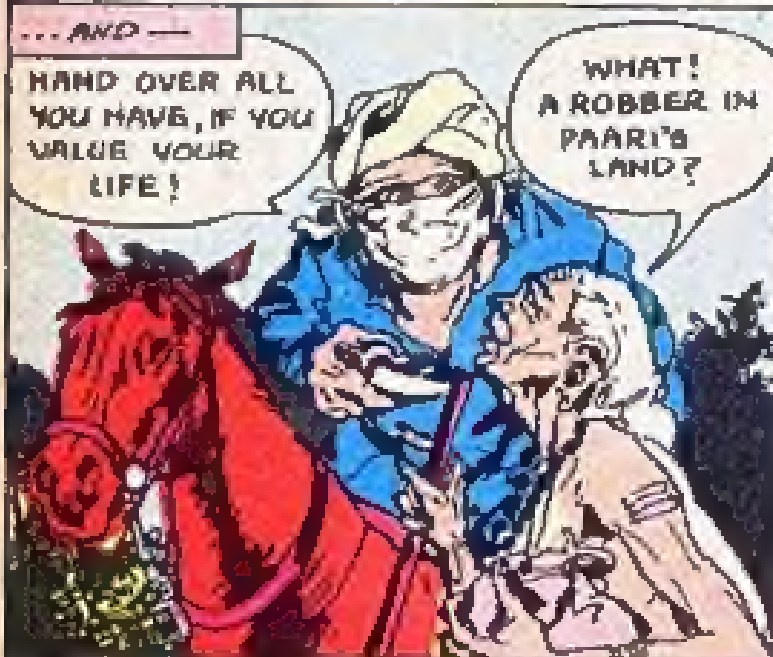
...A FIGURE RODE TOWARDS HER...



...AND —

HAND OVER ALL
YOU HAVE, IF YOU
VALUE YOUR
LIFE!

WHAT!
A ROBBER IN
PAARI'S
LAND?



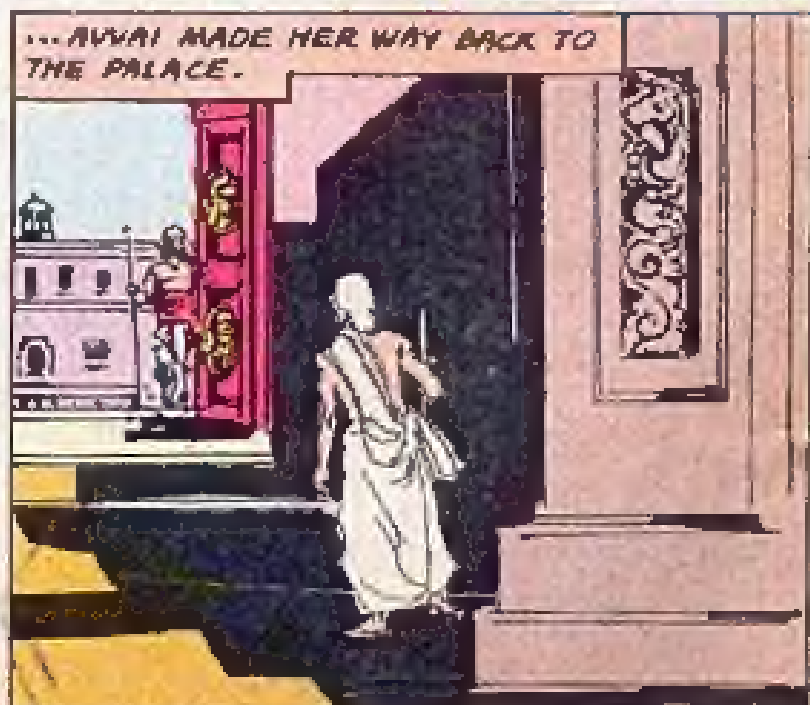
ALL RIGHT, HERE
YOU ARE! BUT YOUR
KING WILL HEAR OF
THIS, BELIEVE ME.



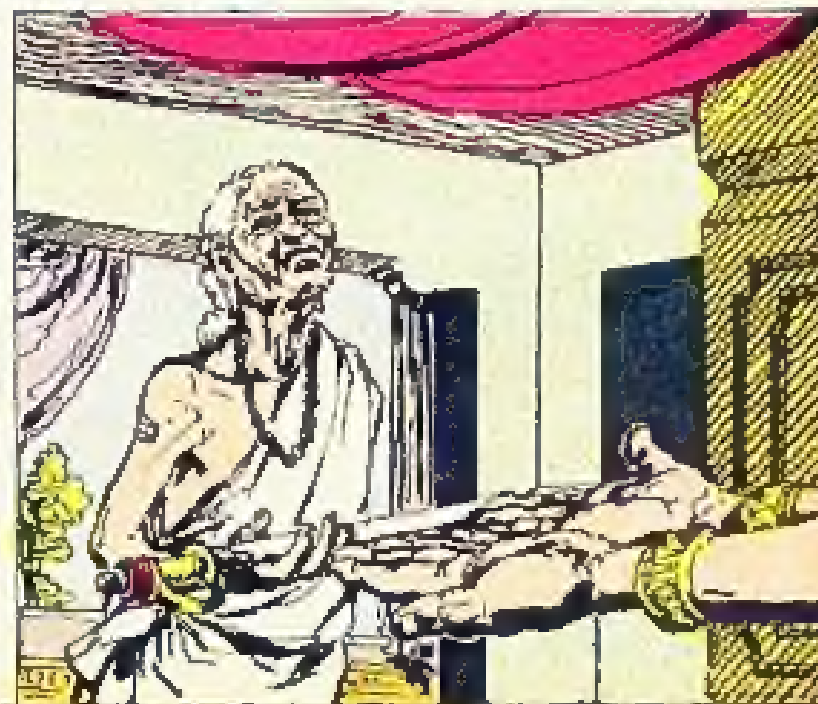
WHEN THE ROBBER
HAD RIDDEN AWAY...



...AVVAI MADE HER WAY BACK TO
THE PALACE.









AVVAI AGREED AT ONCE AND STAYED THERE FOR A FEW MORE MONTHS.

THEN, LEAVING PARI'S KINGDOM, AVVAI CONTINUED ON HER WANDERINGS. ONE DAY, HER PATH LED HER THROUGH A VAST STRETCH OF BARREN COUNTRY.



AS SHE WALKED ON, HUNGER AND THIRST BEGAN TO TORMENT HER.

NOT A SINGLE
FRUIT-BEARING TREE!
NOT A STREAM OF WATER
IN SIGHT!



SOMEHOW SHE STAGGERED ON TILL...



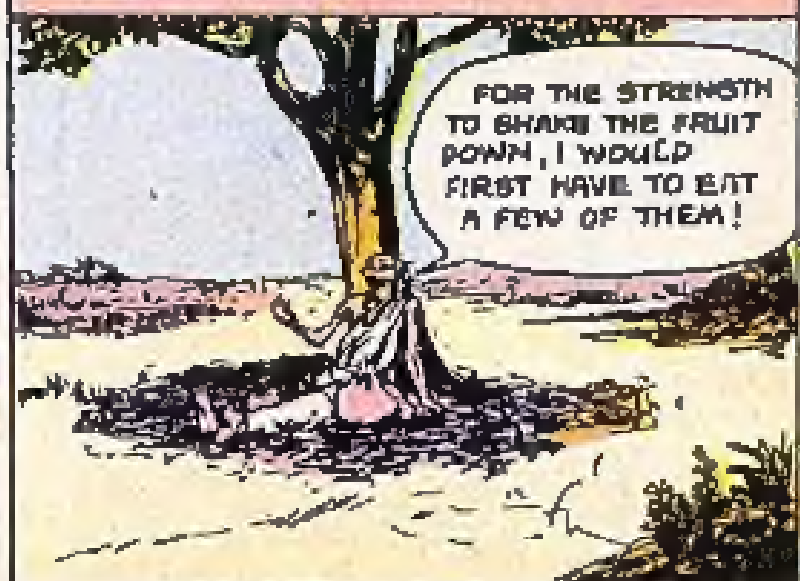
...AT LAST —

A JAMUN* TREE!
IS IT REAL? OR
AM I SEEING
THINGS?



AVVAI APPROACHED THE TREE AND SAT EXHAUSTED UNDER IT.

FOR THE STRENGTH
TO SHAKE THE FRUIT
DOWN, I WOULD
FIRST HAVE TO EAT
A FEW OF THEM!



* A LUSCIOUS DARK VIOLET FRUIT

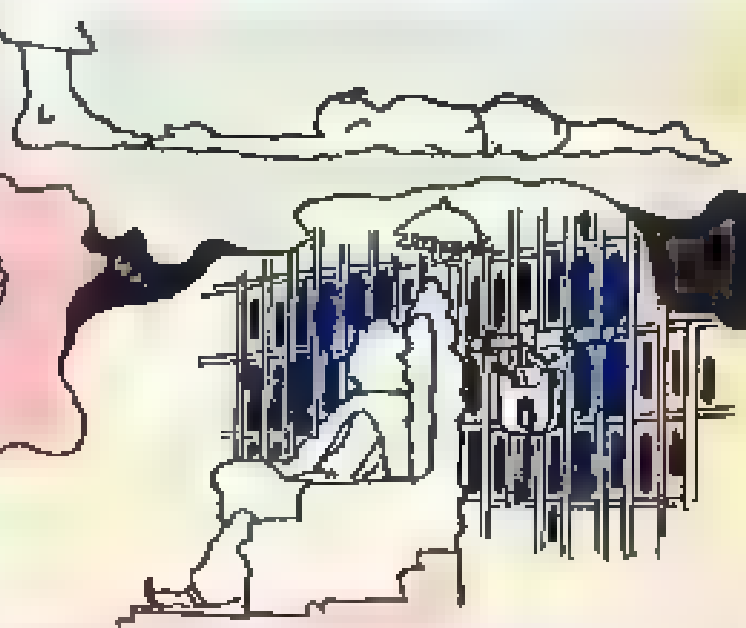
EVEN THERE, TRAPPED IN SUCH A SITUATION, AVVAI DID NOT LOSE HER SENSE OF HUMOUR.

NOW, WHEN THIS STOMACH CANNOT GET A THING TO EAT, HOW KEENLY IT HUNGERS FOR YOUR PAYABAM, PAARI!

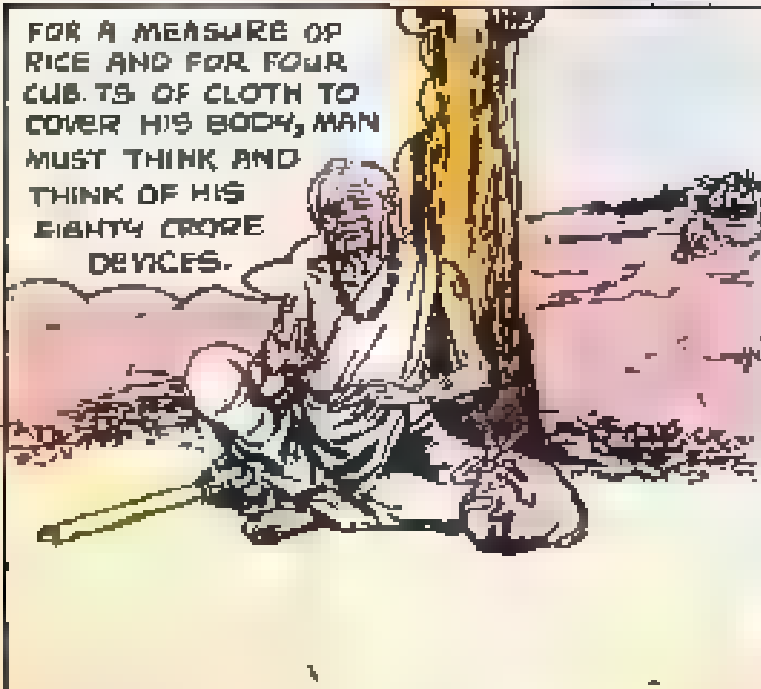
"O MY BAG OF TROUBLES, IF I ASK YOU TO MANAGE WITHOUT FOOD FOR ONE DAY, YOU CANNOT. YET, WHEN YOU COULD HAVE TAKEN IN ENOUGH FOR DAYS TO COME, YOU DID NOT AGREE. NEVER WILL YOU UNDERSTAND MY TROUBLES. YOU ARE A DIFFICULT ONE TO LIVE WITH!"



WE BOW TO THE UNDESERVING, WE CROSS THE SEAS, WE PUT ON MANY ACTS, WE ENSLAVE PEOPLE AND RULE OVER THEM, WE SING THE PRAISES OF ALL KINDS OF MEN— ALL FOR A MEASURE OF RICE FOR THIS TYRANT



FOR A MEASURE OF RICE AND FOR FOUR CUBITS OF CLOTH TO COVER HIS BODY, MAN MUST THINK AND THINK OF HIS EIGHTY CRORE DEVICES.



AVVAI LAUGHED AT THESE VERSES, COMPOSED ON AN EMPTY STOMACH!

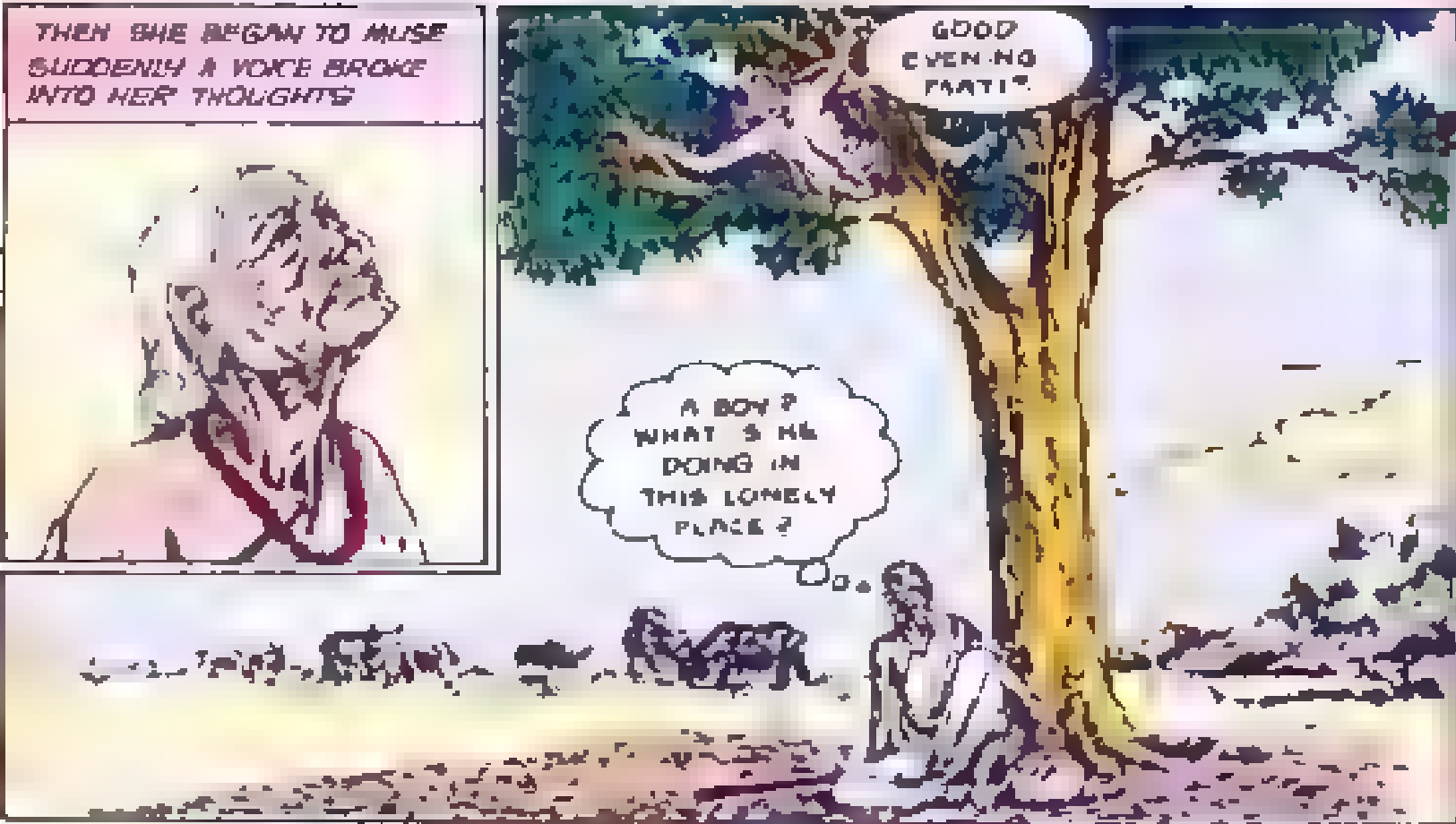


THEN SHE BEGAN TO MUSE
SUDDENLY A VOICE BROKE
INTO HER THOUGHTS



GOOD
EVENING
PATTI.

A BOY?
WHAT IS HE
DOING IN
THIS LONELY
PLACE?

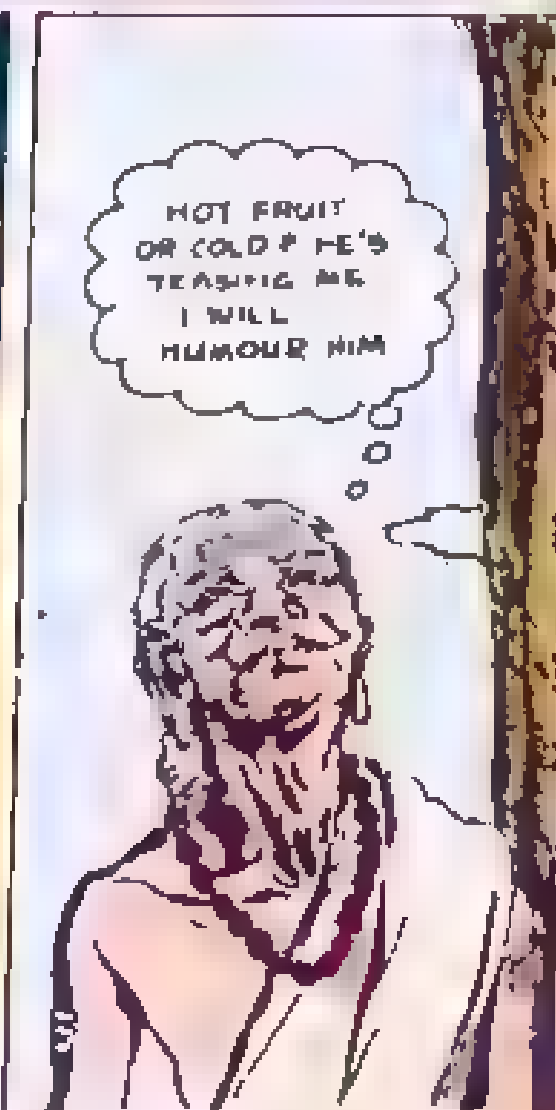


MY CHILD
I AM TIRED AND
HUNGRY WILL
YOU THROW ME
SOME FRUIT?

LET AUNT,
PATTI I DO YOU
WANT HOT FRUIT
OR COLD?



HOT FRUIT
OR COLD? HE'S
TEASING ME
I WILL
HUMOUR HIM



MAMA - THROW
ME SOME HOT
FRUIT

PLUCKING SOME JAMUNS, THE BOY THREW
THEM DOWN AVVAI PICKED THEM UP.

BUT BEFORE PUTTING THEM INTO HER
MOUTH, SHE HAD TO BLOW AWAY THE
DUST ON
THEM

HA, HA, HA!

WHY ARE YOU
LAUGHING,
CHILD?

ARE THE
FRUITS TOO
HOT,
PATTI?

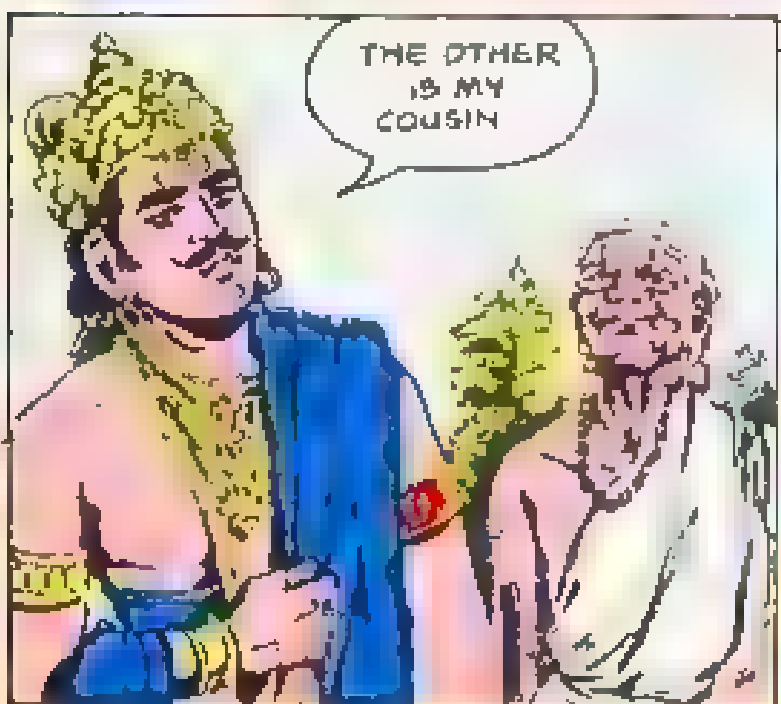
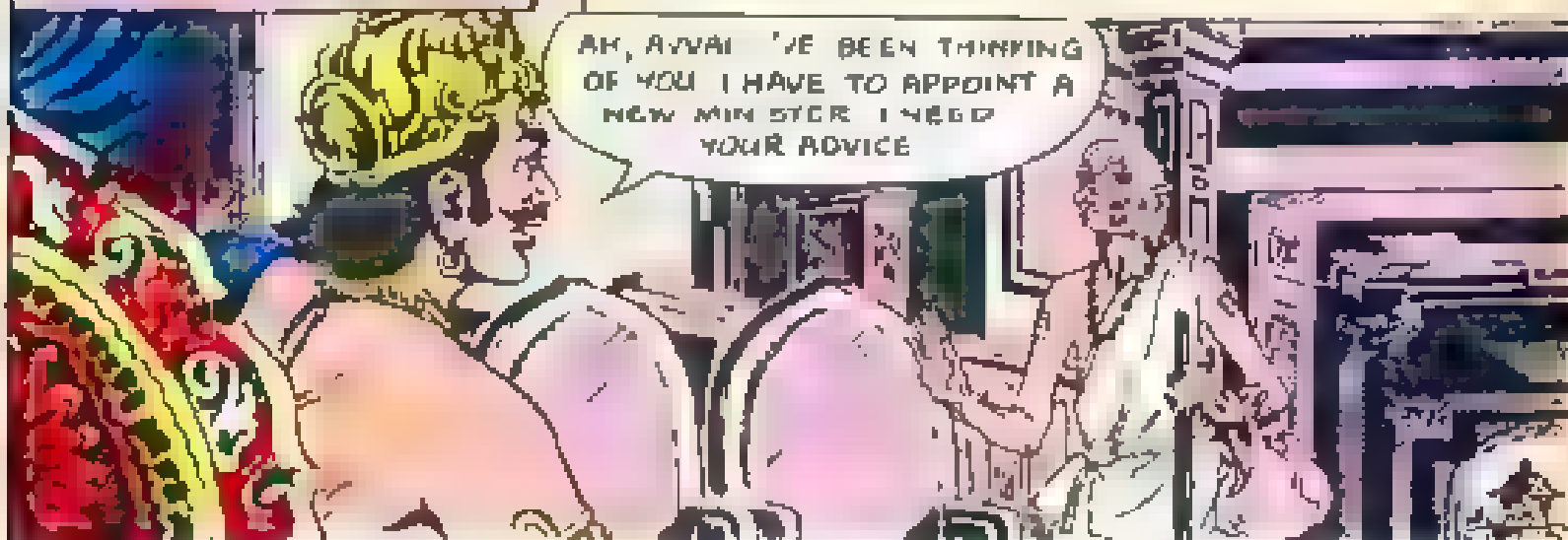


SUDDENLY ANNA UNDERSTOOD THAT THE BOY HAD MADE A FUN ON THE WORD "HOT"



THE SOLE CONSIDERATION

AYVAI OFTEN VISITED THE COURTS OF KINGS WHERE SHE WAS WELCOMED WITH WARMTH AND HEARD WITH RESPECT



THE DISEASE WE ARE BORN WITH COULD KILL US ON THE OTHER HAND THE HEALING THAT GROWS IN THE JUNGLE CURES US



MERIT SHOULD BE THE SOLE CONSIDERATION IN APPOINTING A PERSON TO A POSITION OF RESPONSIBILITY. FIND OUT WHICH OF THEM IS MORE CAPABLE, JUST AND TRUSTWORTHY AND APPOINT HIM



I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU, AVVA WHEN SEEK ADVICE NO ONE SPARKS OUT FREELY

THAT IS ANOTHER QUALITY YOU MUST LOOK FOR IN THE MINISTER YOU APPOINT



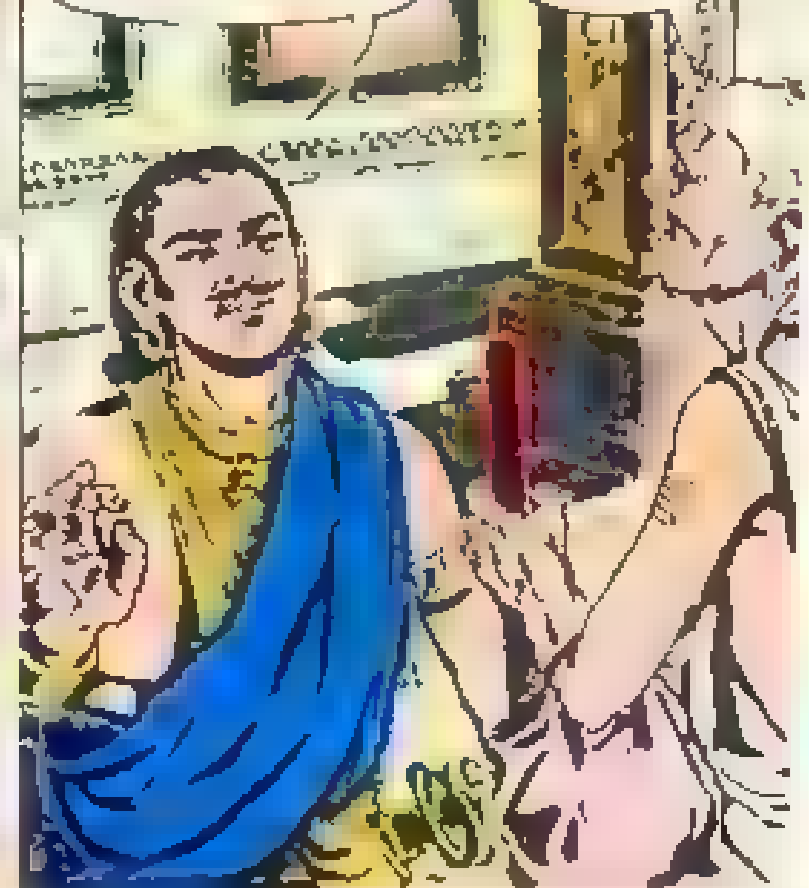
A WEEK LATER

AVVA, I HAVE APPOINTED THE NEW MINISTER..



AND MERIT WAS THE SOLE CONSIDERATION IN MY CHOICE

I AM HAPPY TO HEAR THAT



VARAPPUYARA

ONCE AVVAI WAS INVITED TO A KINGDOM WHERE AN ASSEMBLY OF POETS WAS TO BE HELD AS USUAL, SHE WALKED ALL THE WAY THERE.



THIS SPRING, TOO, 'S DRYING UP

WILL THE DROUGHT THIS TIME MEAN THE DEATH OF US ALL?



THE CROPS ARE RUINED WHAT SHALL WE DO FOR FOOD?



AVVAI REACHED THE PALACE AS THE POETS BEGAN TO READ OUT THEIR COMPOSITIONS

ONE AFTER ANOTHER THEY PRAISED THE KING AND BLESSED HIM WITH A LONG LIFE AND A PROSPEROUS REIGN



Quiz **INDIA -16**

Compiled by : Swarn Khaneapur
 Illustrated by : S.K. Parab



(A)

This dam built by the Chola king in 1800 years ago is the oldest in India. On which river does it stand?



DID YOU KNOW...

That in the Hall of a Thousand Pillars of the Madurai Temple there are carved pillars which when tapped produce musical notes?



(B)

This 1220-metre long temple corridor the longest in our country belongs to a temple on the island of the Palk Straits. What is the name of the temple?



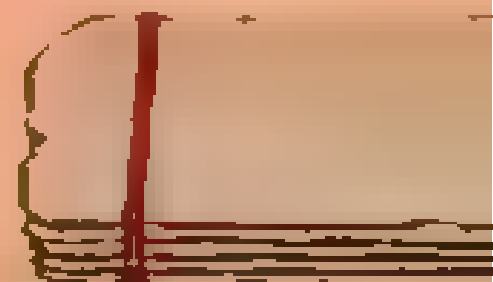
... built by the Chola king Karikala,
... is ago, is the oldest in the country.
... river does it stand ?



... g temple corridor, the longest
... gs to a temple on a island in
... it is the name of the temple?



(C) This is the temple
... where Shiva is
... Nataraja. What
... this temple ?



(D) The Tirukku
... famous Tan
... was its auth



ple in Tamil Nadu
represented as
is the name of



ral is a world-
hil Classic. Who
nor ?

Rules

1. The first fifty all-correct entries will each win a prize of Rs. 10.
2. The remaining all-correct entries will each win a colourful picture post card.
3. The decision of the judges is final and binding.
4. Mail your entries, (entry form given below) to

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Post Bag No. 16542
Cumballa Hill P O Bombay-400 026.

QUIZ-16 INDIA

ENTRY FORM

Name : _____

Age : _____

Address : _____

State : _____

Pin Code : _____

MY ANSWERS

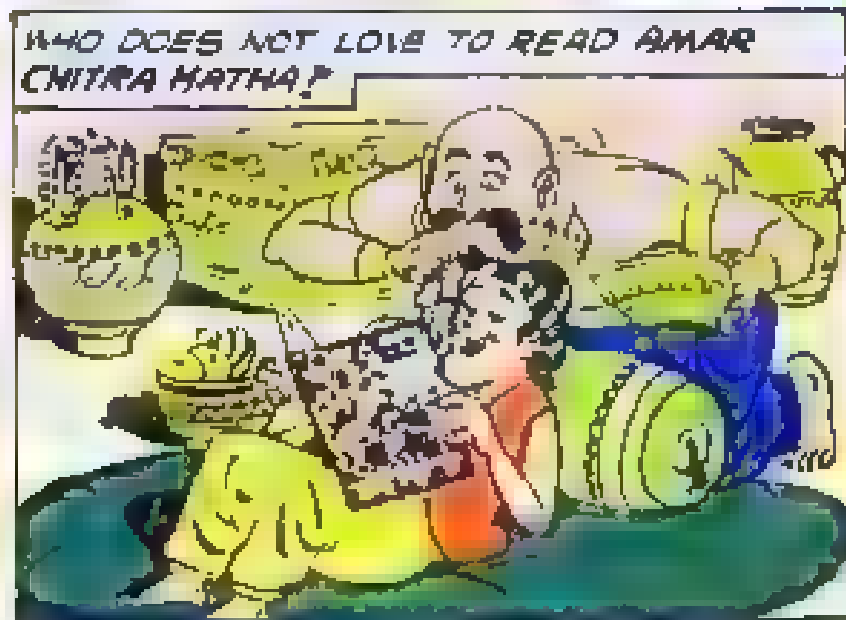
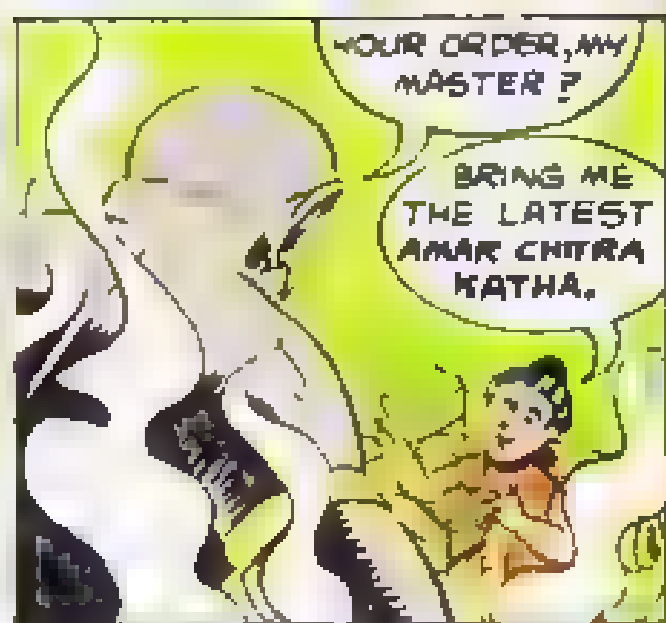
A _____

B _____

C _____

D _____

The last date for receiving
entries 14.2.85



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FINALLY, ANJAI ROSE TO HER FEET EVERYONE WAITED NERVOUSLY TO HEAR HER COMPOSITION



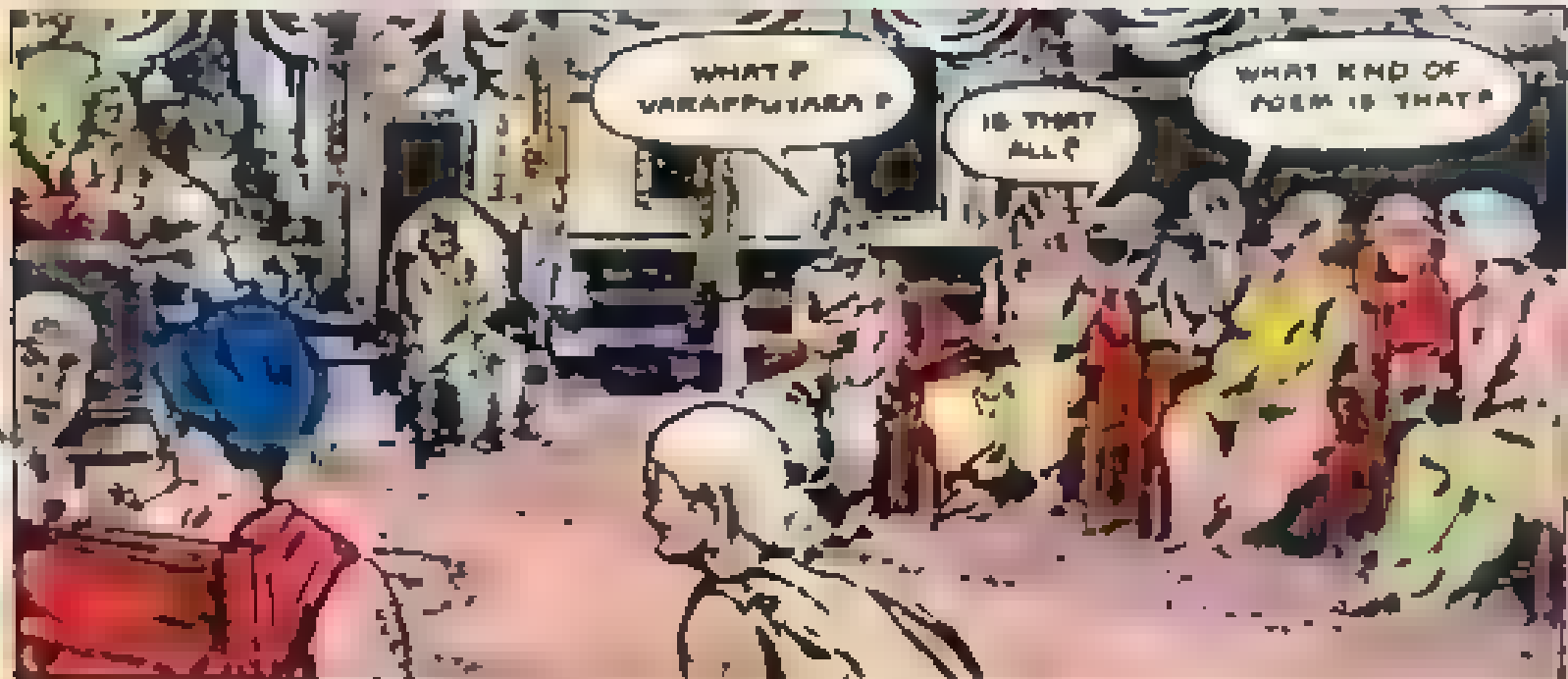
O KING, A PARROT IS FOND OF THE WORDS IT HAS LEARNT AND IS NEVER ASHAMED OR TIRED OF REPEATING THEM BUT IT BECOMES SPEECHLESS AND DIES AT ONE TERRIFIED CRY WHEN IT SEES A BIG CAT APPROACHING ITS CAGE



SO O KING, THE POEM I PRESENT BEFORE YOU IS VARAPPUTARA?



AND ANJAI TOOK HER SEAT AGAIN



WHAT? VARAPPUTARA?

IS THAT ALL?

WHAT KIND OF POEM IS THAT?

BUT THE KING WHEN THERE WERE MORE TO
IT THAN THAT

AVVAI, I WOULD BE
GRATEFUL IF YOU
EXPLAINED YOUR
POEM TO US.

O KING, I AM A POET,
WORDS COME EASILY TO ME
BUT EVEN I AM STRUCK
DUMB WHEN I SEE THE
HORRORS OF DROUGHT
AND FAMINE IN YOUR
LAND

BY VARAPPUNARA, I MAKE MY
REQUEST THAT YOU EASE
BUNDS IN YOUR LAND THESE
BUNDS WILL INCREASE THE
LEVEL OF THE WATER
MORE WATER WILL
ENABLE YOU TO
IRRIGATE YOUR LAND
BETTER AND YOUR
PEOPLE WILL
PROSPER

THE KING WAS VERY PLEASED

AVVAI YOU HAVE SPOKEN
LIKE THE GREAT POET AND
HUMANITARIAN
THAT YOU ARE

THEREAFTER, THE POETS AND MINISTERS
ALL LEFT

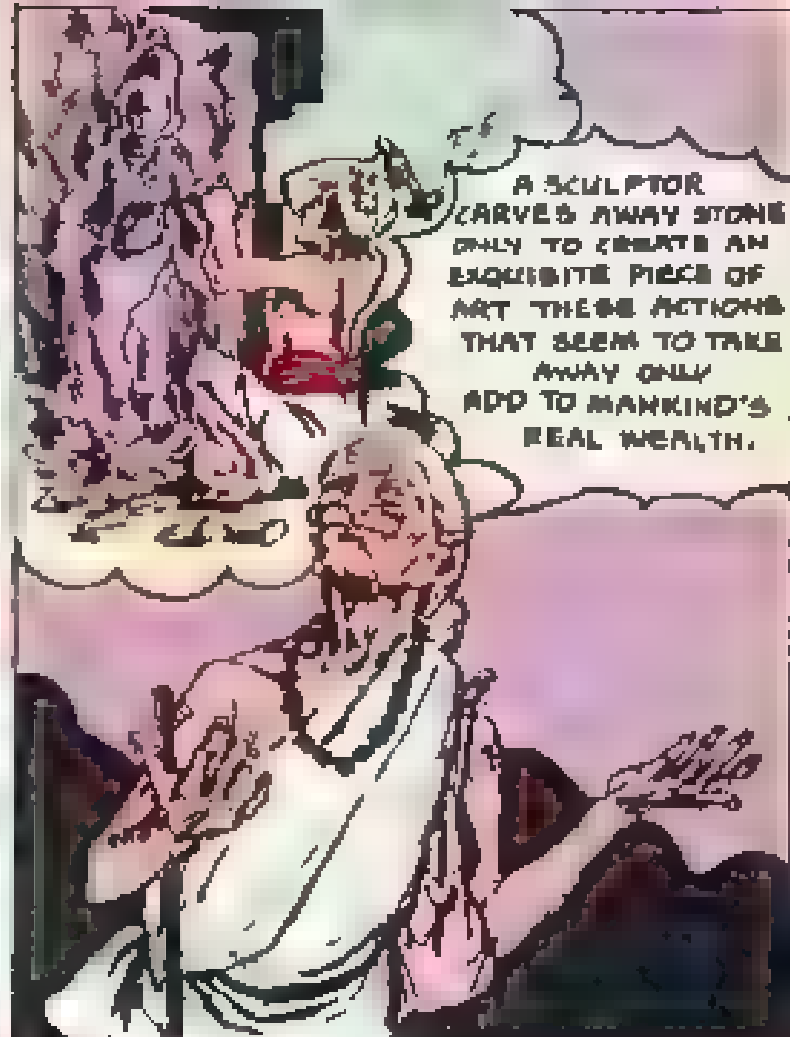
THE KING WHO TILL THEN HAD BEEN SO
ENTHUSIASTIC, SUDDENLY HAD SECOND THOUGHTS.

MMM... BUNDS
BUNDS EVERYWHERE
WILL DEplete OUR
ROYAL TREASURY.

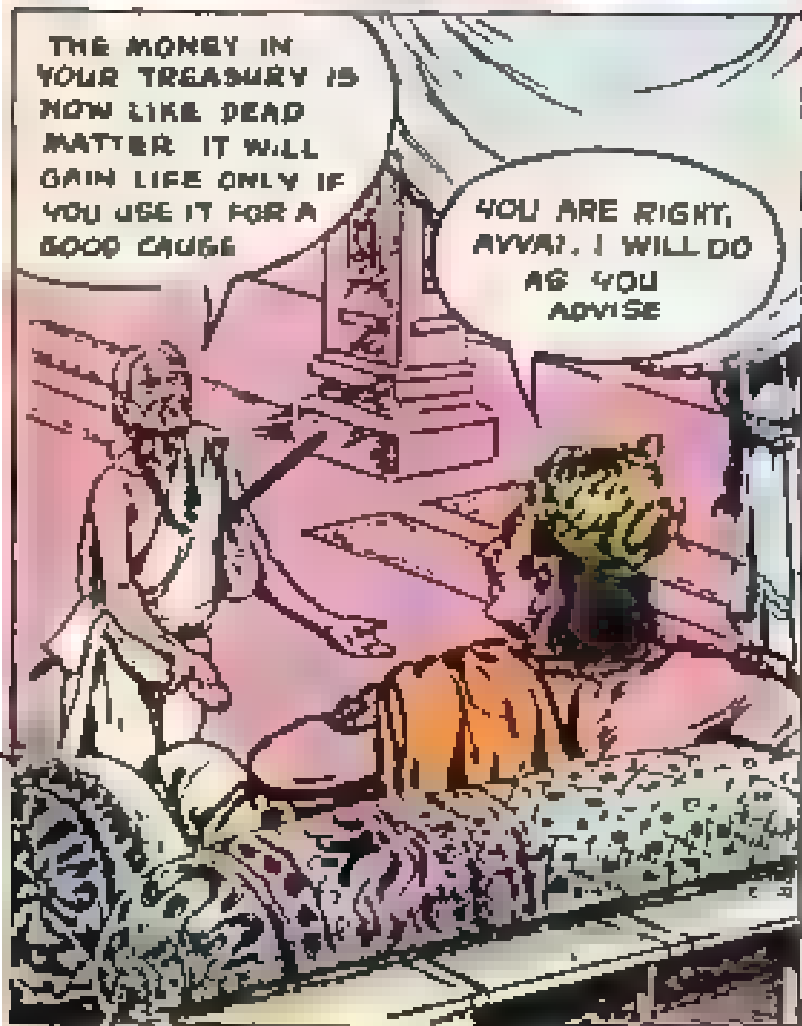
O KING, WHAT
YOU SAY REMINDS
ME OF ANOTHER
VERSE



GIVING AWAY
ALMS MAY DIMINISH
A MAN'S MATERIAL
WEALTH BUT IT ADDS
TO HIS SPIRITUAL
WEALTH



A SCULPTOR
CARVES AWAY STONE
ONLY TO CREATE AN
EXQUISITE PIECE OF
ART THESE ACTIONS
THAT SEEM TO TAKE
AWAY ONLY
ADD TO MANKIND'S
REAL WEALTH.



THE MONEY IN
YOUR TREASURY IS
NOW LIKE DEAD
MATTER IT WILL
GAIN LIFE ONLY IF
YOU USE IT FOR A
GOOD CAUSE

YOU ARE RIGHT,
AYYAI. I WILL DO
AS YOU
ADVISE



AND THE VERY NEXT DAY, THE WORK ON THE
BUNDS WAS BEGUN.

AVVAI TO THE RESCUE

ONE DAY, AS AVVAI WAS PASSING THROUGH A VILLAGE —

KICK HIM!

THRASH HIM!

KEEP OUT OF OUR STREET, YOU FILTHY URGHIN!



I'M GOING... PLEASE DON'T HURT ME.

THEN GO AT ONCE! OR I'LL...

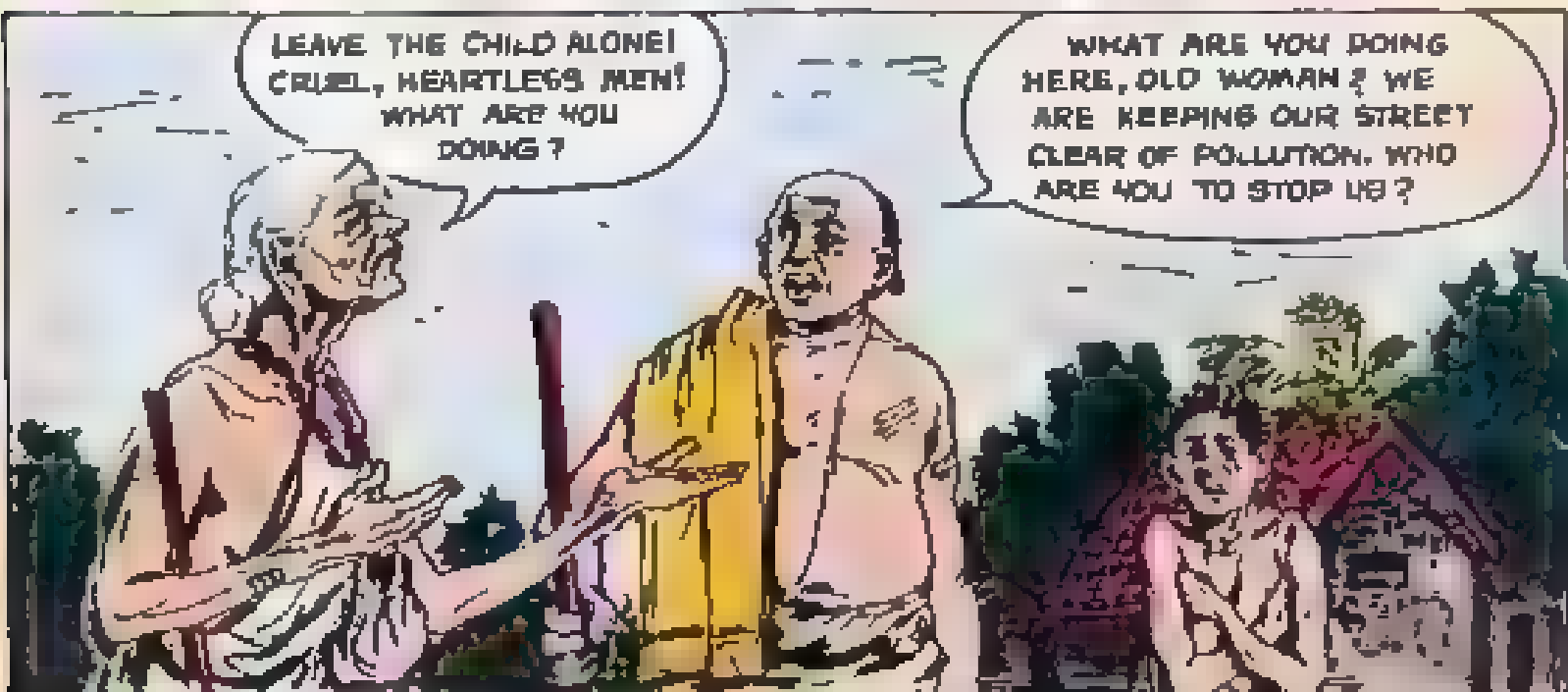


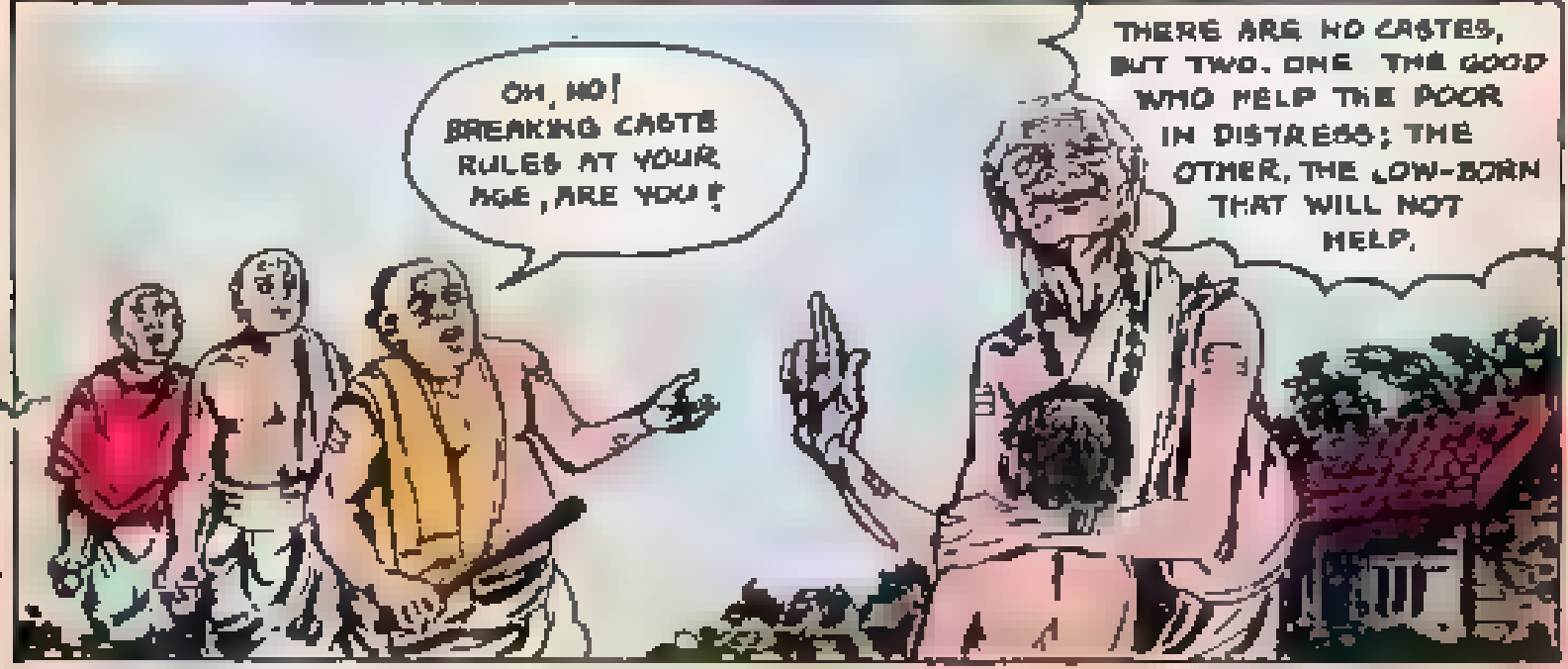
STOP!

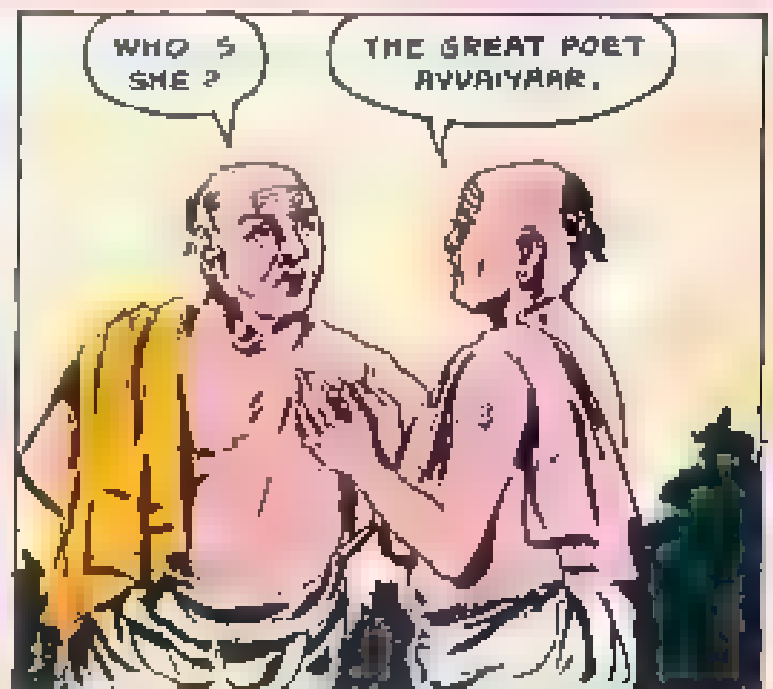
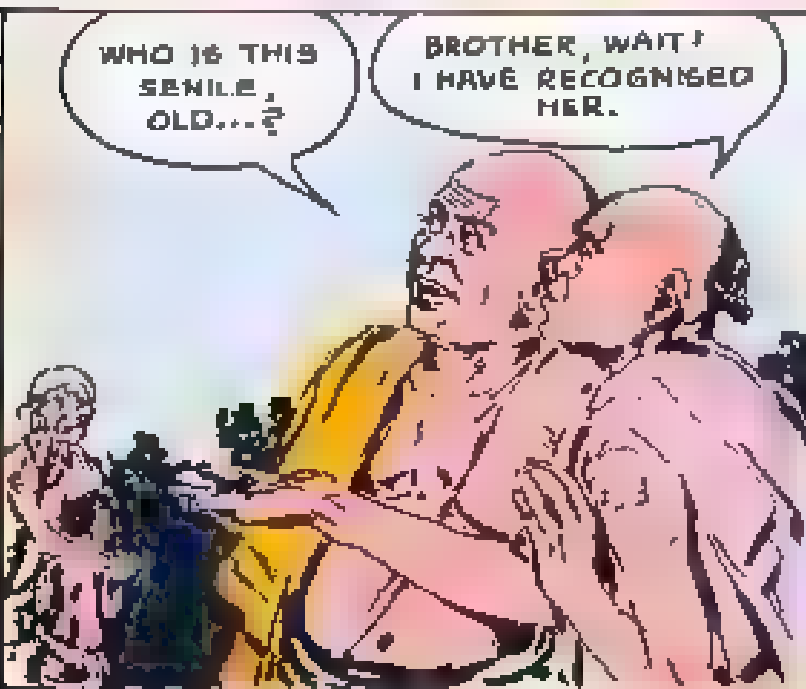
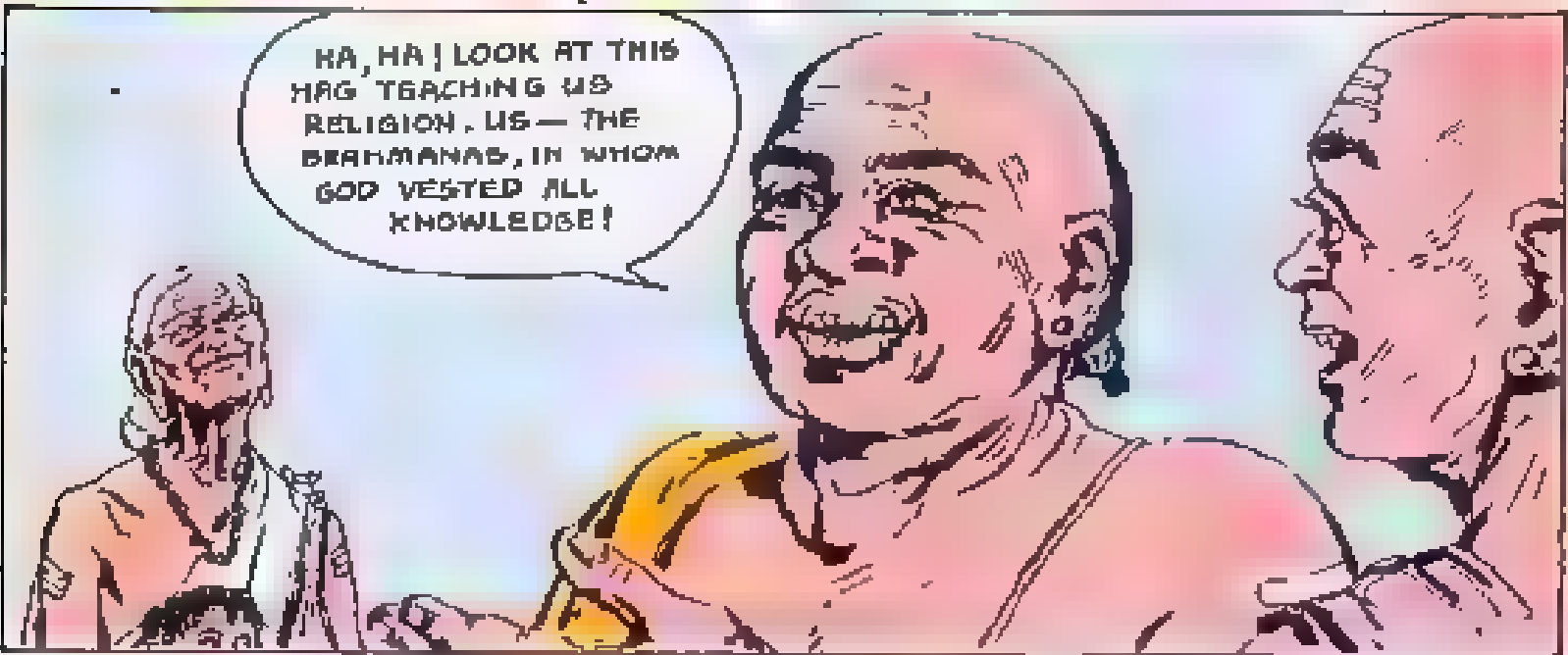


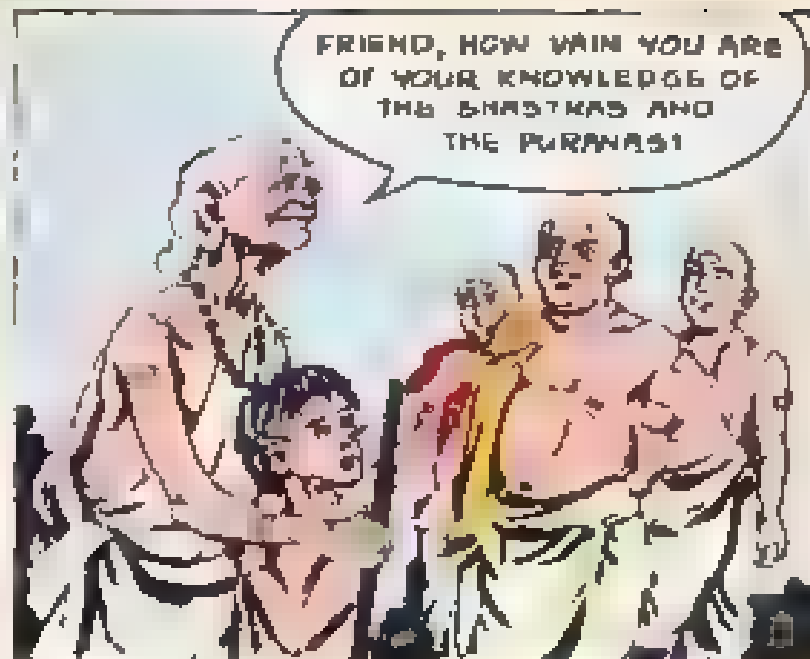
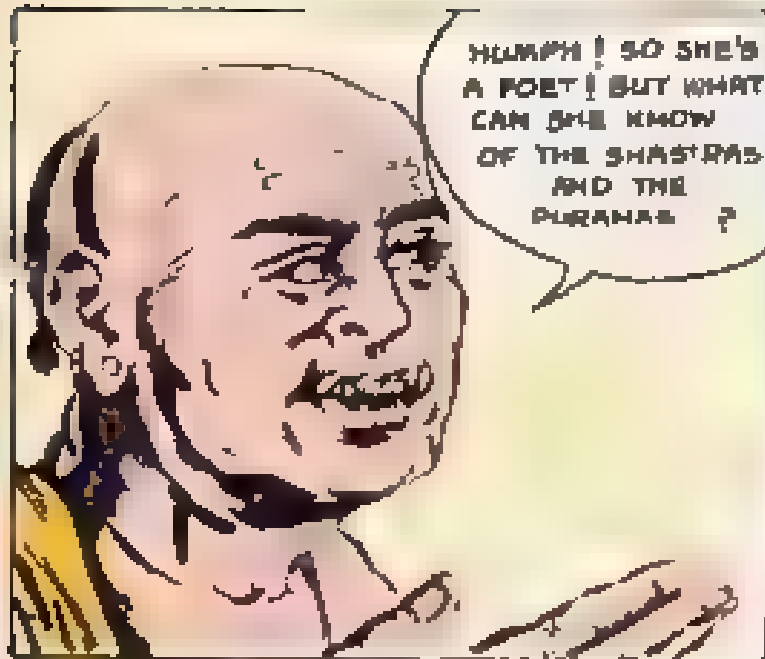
LEAVE THE CHILD ALONE! CRUEL, HEARTLESS MEN! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, OLD WOMAN? WE ARE KEEPING OUR STREET CLEAR OF POLLUTION. WHO ARE YOU TO STOP US?









LET NO ONE THEREFORE
BOAST OF KNOWING THIS OR
THAT... EVERY CREATURE
ON THIS EARTH EXCELS
IN SOMETHING



YOU ARE NOT
THE CENTRE OF THE
EARTH, O BRAHMANA.



THE BRAHMANA LOOKED AS IF HE WOULD
EXPLODE, THEN SLOWLY...

... HIS EYES FELL

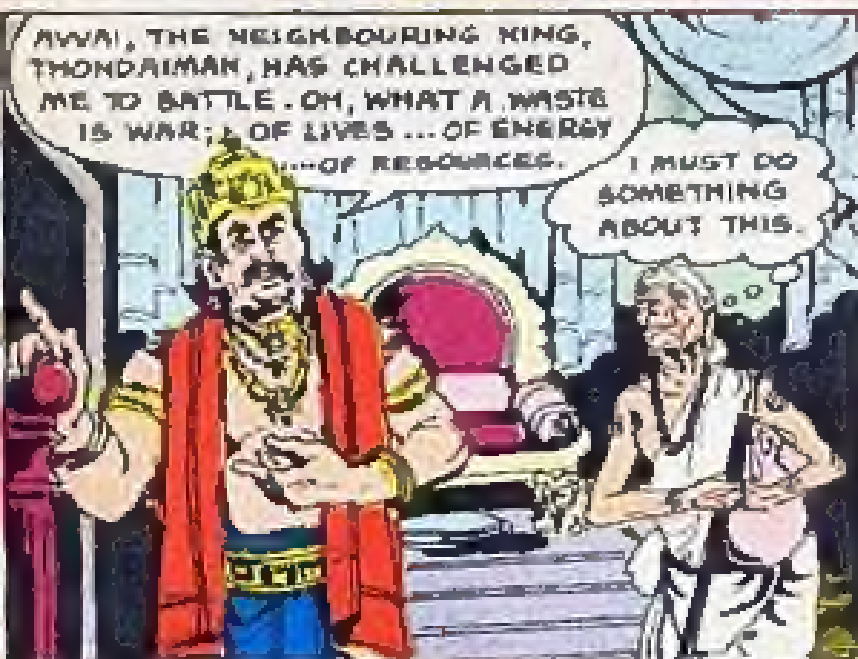
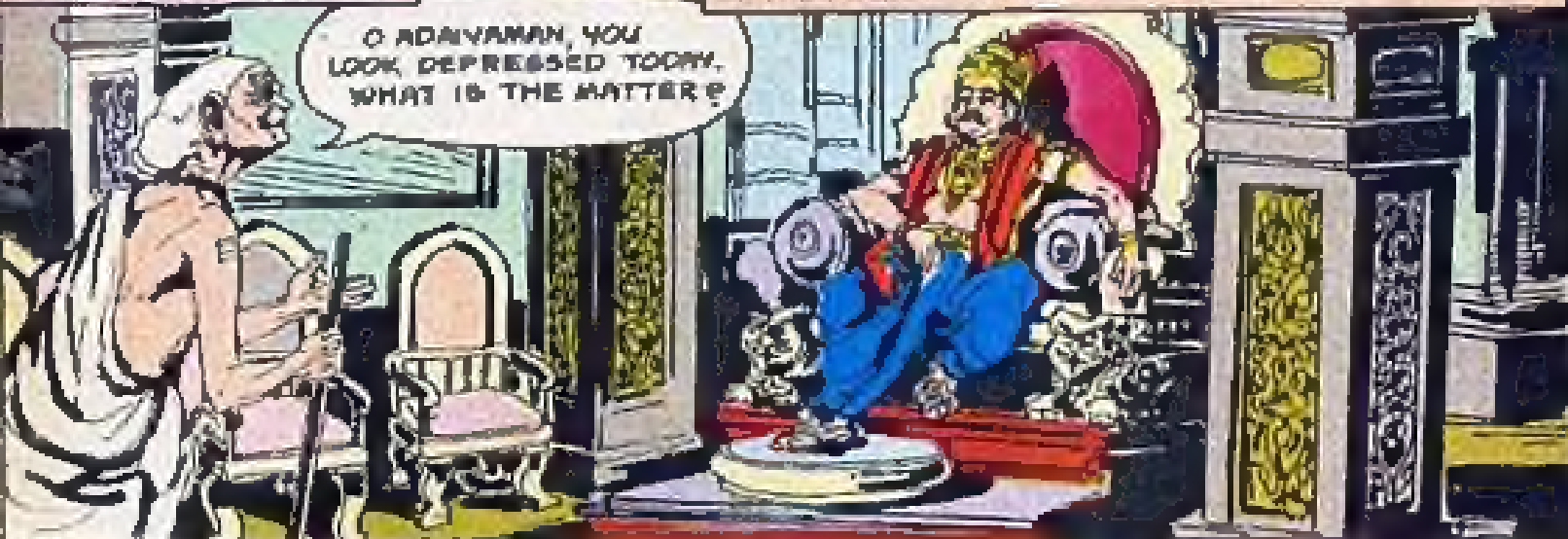


AND FOLLOWED BY THE OTHERS HE
QUETLY LEFT THE SCENE.

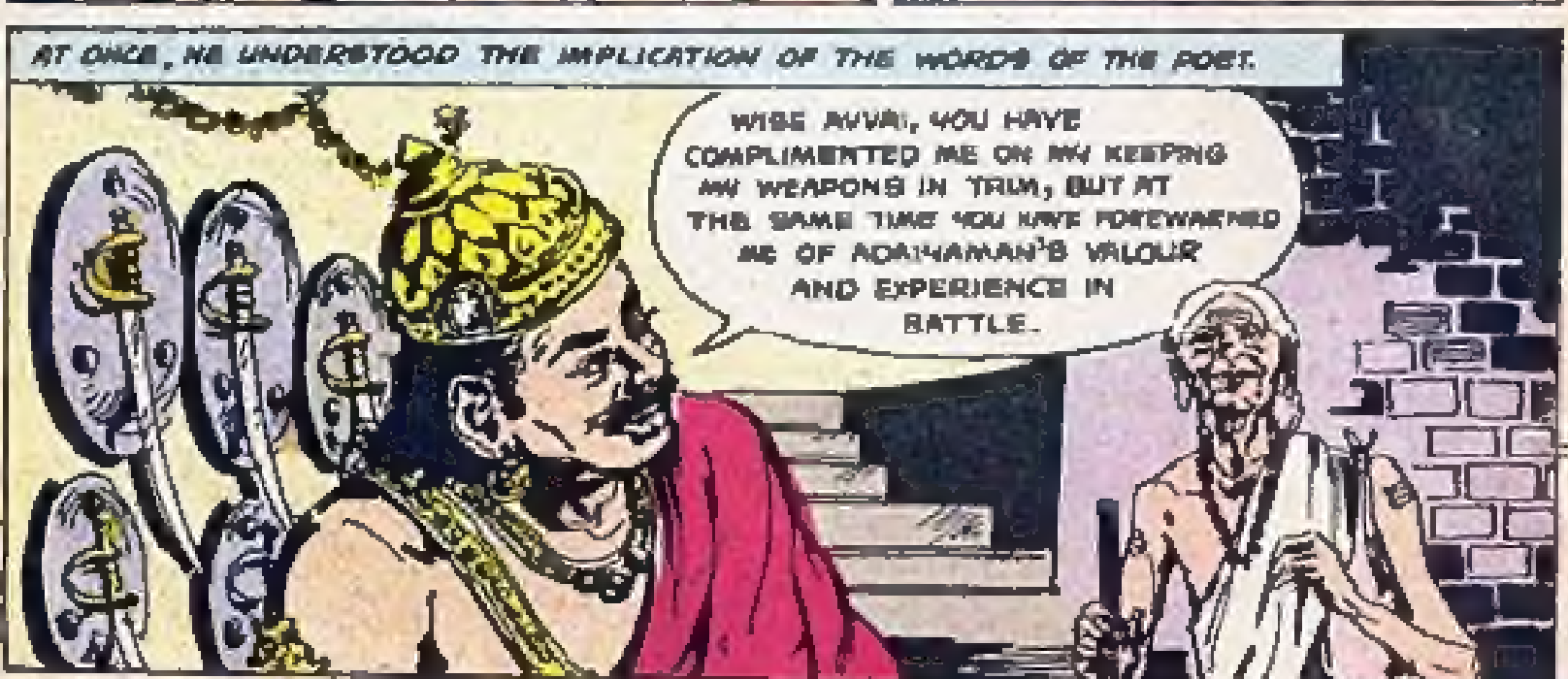
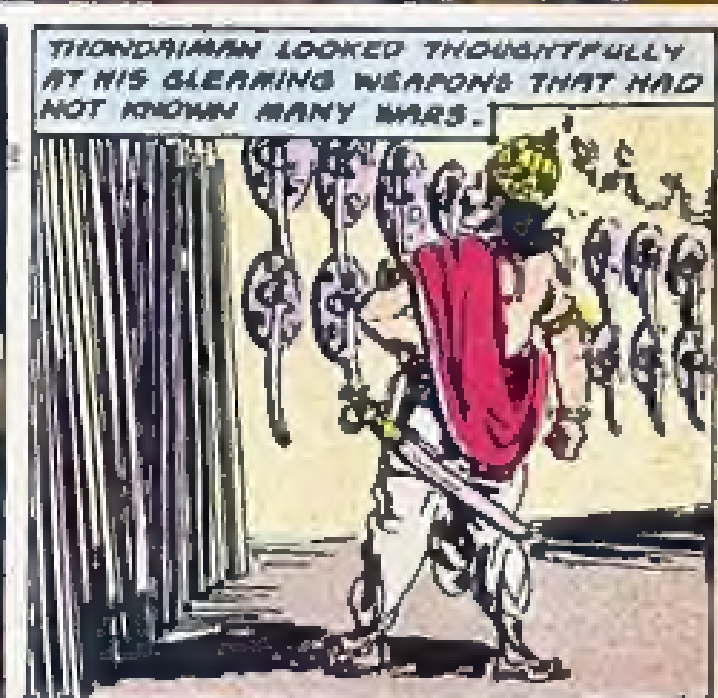


AVVAI AND ADAIYAMAN

AVVAI OFTEN SPENT TIME IN THE KINGDOM OF THE MIGHTY KING ADAIYAMAN, WHOM SHE HELD AS ONE OF HER DEAREST FRIENDS. ONE DAY —

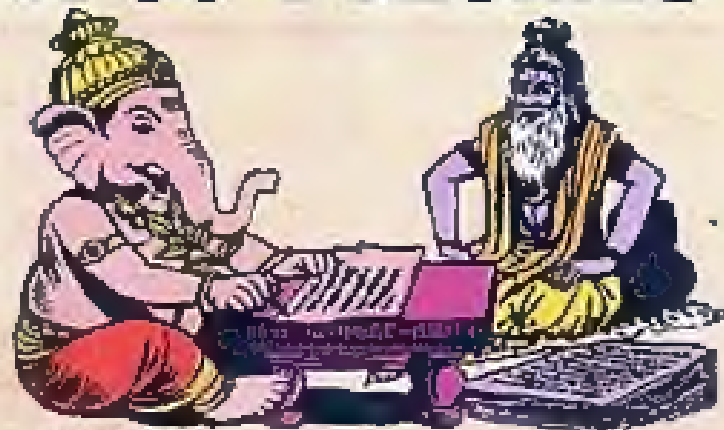


AND AT THE ARMOURY, THONDAIMAN PROUDLY SHOWED AVVAI HIS ARRAY OF WEAPONS.





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